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1 MAY 1959

cc id

Mr. William Benton
Publisher & Chairman
Encyclopaedia Britannica
342 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

STAT

Dear Bill:

Many thanks for the newspaper clipping of your letter to the New York Times which you were so thoughtful to bring to my attention.

I read it with a great deal of interest and appreciate your kindness in writing as you did to the Times.

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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O/DCI/[] 28 April 59

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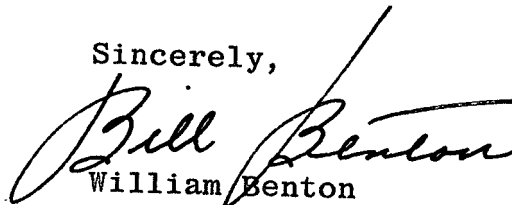
WILLIAM BENTON
PUBLISHER & CHAIRMAN

April 24, 1959

Dear Allen,

I think you may be interested in my letter to the New York Times of this morning in which I tried to pay you tribute. Again I congratulate you on your New Orleans speech.

Sincerely,


William Benton

The Honorable Allen Dulles
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

Attachment
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Letters to

Appraising Soviet Output

Allen Dulles' Speech Declared a Warning of Russian Potential

The writer of the following letter is a former Assistant Secretary of State and has served as United States Senator from Connecticut.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

The April 9 issue of The Times carried a front-page story with the headlines: "Soviet Won't Top U. S. 1970 Output, C. I. A. Chief Says"; "Allen Dulles Discounts Idea Russians Will Pull Ahead in Total Production."

On the night that Mr. Dulles spoke in New Orleans I spoke in Chicago on the same subject—but with an emphasis far different from that conveyed in The Times account of the Dulles speech. I tried to warn that the Soviets might succeed in their fourfold effort to outproduce the United States; outstrip us in foreign trade, displace the dollar with the ruble and outmatch us in foreign aid.

Those who read the full text of Allen Dulles' thoughtful remarks in that issue of The Times, and those who read The Times editorial comment on April 13, will have gauged correctly the sobering substance of what Mr. Dulles had to say: a strong warning that, while some of Khrushchev's claims for the Seven-Year Plan may be wishful thinking, at current rates of growth Soviet industry is steadily and rapidly narrowing the gap between its output and that of the United States. Further automation can in many ways be more effectively applied in a totalitarian society.

Rate of Growth

I fear that many casual readers will not have studied the editorial, or studied the text, and will have seen only the misleading front-page headlines. The news story which followed was equally misleading. The first quote our casual reader would see is that Dulles labeled as "nonsense" Khrushchev's prediction that the Soviet economy would lead

the world by 1970. The news story does not mention what The Times editorial later pointed out: Dulles' warning that if our future industrial growth is only 2 per cent a year "the United States will be virtually committing economic suicide." Our growth for the past two years has been less than 2 per cent; indeed on balance we have been receding.

Further on in the news story one reads that the "United States electric utility industry, for one, was widening its lead over the Soviet Union in the production of electricity." The news story does not report that Dulles cited this fact—which has received a great deal of publicity elsewhere—only to emphasize that "what is true about electricity is not true (for energy production) across the board, as some commentators concluded * * * Soviet production of coal, petroleum, natural gas and hydroelectric power amounted to 45 per cent of United States production in 1958. By 1965 it will be close to 60 per cent."

As a whole, the news story failed markedly to convey Mr. Dulles' strong warning on the danger posed for us by the Soviet economic challenge.

Estimate of Challenge

Mr. Dulles' speech was an honest and dispassionate appraisal of this challenge. Because he is head of the Central Intelligence Agency it was a most important estimate. His speech was meant to dispel the notion that the Communists are supermen.

More importantly, it was obviously meant to warn that we could lose to the Communists—"because of our complacency and because they have devoted a far greater share of their power, skill and resources to our destruction than we have been willing to dedicate to our own preservation."

The evidence is overwhelming that American public opinion has tended consistently to underestimate the Soviet threat rather than to overestimate it. We have, as Barbara Ward has said, an "ideological prejudice with respect to the facts about the Soviet Union."

The press, along with our other media, has a responsibility to combat ignorance here in this area as with other great issues of our times. This responsibility extends not only to the editorial writers and the special correspondents but to the reporter, the copy desk and the make-up desk.

WILLIAM BENTON.

Southport, Conn., April 17, 1959.